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AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 114498

SUBJECT: VIET-NAM HIGHLIGHTS

REFERENCE: STATE 108745

I. THE UNITED STATES

PUBLIC ATTENTION DURING WEEK FOCUSED ON HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES FAILURE TO ADOPT COOPER-CHURCH AMENDMENT TO

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FOREIGN MILITARY SALES BILL AND ON SO-CALLED "TIGER
CAGES" ON PRISON ISLAND OF CON SON VISITED BY TWO MEMBERS
OF HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE. GVN REPATRIATION OF NVN POW'S
AND FISHERMAN (ITEM IV B, BELOW) DREW ONLY LIMITED
ATTENTION.

II. PARIS TALKS

GVN DELEGATE LAM RECALLED THIEU'S ELECTION PROPOSALS
OF JULY 1969 IN HIS SPEECH AT JULY 9 PARIS PLENARY,
WHILE HABIB CONTRASTED OUR FLEXIBILITY AND REASONABLENESS
WITH OTHER SIDE'S INTRANSIGENCE. OTHER SIDES'S
SPOKESMEN ATTACKED U.S. INDOCHINA ACTIONS IN STANDARD
TERMS AND REFERRED TO PUBLICIZED REVELATIONS CONCERNING
CON SON PRISON. DRV SPOKESMAN ASSERTED THAT APPOINTMENT OF
AMBASSADOR BRUCE SIMPLY RIGHTED A WRONG AND THAT U.S. NEEDED
TO CHANGE ITS ATTITUDE FOR PARIS MEETINGS TO PROGRESS. DURING
REBUTTALS LAM REFERRED TO FORTHCOMING GVN REPATRIATION
OF NORTH VIETNAMESE PRISONERS AND SEAMEN ON JULY 11.

III. INTERNAL

A. EIGHTEEN SLATES FILE FOR UPPER HOUSE ELECTION

A TOTAL OF EIGHTEEN SLATES OF TEN CANDIDATES EACH FILED
TO COMPETE IN THE AUGUST 30 ELECTION OF ONE-HALF (30
SEATS) OF THE UPPER HOUSE. CONTESTANTS PROVIDE A VARIETY
OF POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS, AND RACE PROMISES TO BE
INTERESTING AND VIGOROUSLY CONTESTED. AT LEAST
FOUR LISTS ARE CLEARLY OPPOSITIONIST; THE ONE OF
THESE THAT APPEARS TO BE STRONGEST INCLUDES A NUMBER OF
MODERATE LAYMENT FROM THE AN QUANG BUDDHIST GROUP.
AFTER A PERIOD OF VACILLATION, LEADING OPPOSITIONIST
TRAN VAN DON DECIDED NOT TO SEEK RE-ELECTION;
NEVERTHELESS A SLATE SUPPORTED BY HIS NATIONAL
SALVATION FRONT WILL MAKE THE RACE. AMONG THE LISTS
BROADLY FAVORABLE TO THE GVN THERE IS CONSIDERABLE
POLITICAL COMPETITION. THE PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT WAS UNABLE TO FORM A
COORDINATED LIST -- A FAILURE THAT MAY WELL MARK ITS
EFFECTIVE DEMISE -- AND COMPONENT PARTIES ARE
SCATTERED THROUGH AT LEAST FOUR SEPARATE SLATES. THE

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CATHOLIC VOTE IS ALSO LIKELY TO BE SERIOUSLY SPLIT.

B. BUDDHISTS ANNOUNCE PEACE PROGRAM

THE AN QUANG BUDDHIST FACTION ISSUED A CALL FOR STEPS LEADING TO AN END TO THE WAR AND A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THE PLAN, EMBODIED IN A LONG SPEECH JULY 12 BY ONE OF AN QUANG'S MOST SENIOR MILITANT MONKS, THICH THIEN MINH, CONSISTS -- ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS -- OF TWO PRINCIPAL POINTS: (A) CEASE-FIRE, AND REGROUPMENT OF TROOPS OF BOTH SIDES IN SPECIFIED AREAS; (B) ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, OR "STRUCTURE", WITH AUTHORITY IN BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIET-NAM, TO ORGANIZE THE ELECTIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WITH INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION.

C. DISABLED VETERANS

PRESIDENT THIEU WENT ON RADIO AND TV JULY 10 TO OUTLINE GVN POLICY ON DISABLED VETERANS, EMPHASIZING THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW ON VETERANS BENEFITS (WHICH HE PROMULGATED JULY 9) AND THE EFFORTS THE GVN IS MAKING TO PROVIDE HOUSING. THIEU WARNED THE DISABLED VETERANS AGAINST FURTHER ILLEGAL ACTS. DISABLED VETERANS AT PRESENT ARE WEAKENED BY LOSS OF PUBLIC SUPPORT AND INTERNAL DIVISION, AND PROBABLY WILL NOT DIRECTLY CHALLENGE PRESIDENT THIEU'S CALL FOR ORDER, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. IF GVN POLICY CAN BE IMPLEMENTED WITH REASONABLE SPEED, PROBLEM OF THE DISABLED VETERANS MAY GRADUALLY BECOME LESS ACUTE.

D. PEACE DELEGATION VISITS VIET-NAM, CAUSES STIR

A "SPECIAL FACT-FINDING MISSION" VISITED VIET-NAM JULY 5-12, UNDER SPONSORSHIP OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION. PURPOSE OF TRIP, ACCORDING TO SPOKESMEN, WAS TO INVESTIGATE RECENT PUBLIC DEMANDS FOR PEACE BY RELIGIOUS, STUDENT AND OTHER GROUPS IN VIET-NAM, AND EXAMINE U.S. AND GVN REACTION. THE MISSION INCLUDED TEN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS, STUDENT AND CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS AS WELL AS OTHERS FROM AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE NETHERLANDS. MEMBERS MET WITH EXTREMIST

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STUDENT LEADERS, AN QUANG BUDDHISTS, PERSONS WITH STORIES
OF PRISON MISTREATMENT TO RELATE, AND OTHERS.
PRIME MINISTER KHIEM DECLINED TO GRANT AN INTERVIEW.
DEPUTY AMBASSADOR BERGER RECEIVED MEMBERS OF GROUP
JULY 10. MAIN STRESS WAS ON ALLEGATIONS OF POLITICAL
REPRESSION AND TERROR TACTICS AGAINST NON-COMMUNIST
OPPOSITION BY GVN. IN PRESS CONFERENCE AND PRIVATE
SESSIONS GROUP MEMBERS ALSO URGED REPLACEMENT OF
"THIEU-KY REGIME" WITH "FAIR AND REPRESENTATIVE"
GOVERNMENT, AS A MEANS OF RESTORING PEACE.

FOLLOWING MEETING JULY 11 WITH VIETNAMESE STUDENT
LEADERS, IN WHICH NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT CHARLES PALMER CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF
AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR GVN, A CROWD OF VIETNAMESE AND
FOREIGN PEACE ADVOCATES, INCLUDING ALL AMERICAN MEMBERS
OF GROUP, ATTEMPTED TO MARCH ON AMERICAN EMBASSY AND
INDEPENDENCE PALACE. POLICE DISPERSED THEM WITH
TEAR GAS, THEN INVADED UNIVERSITY COMPOUND ITSELF AND --
ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS -- KEPT CROWD BOTTLED UP
WHILE THEY DISCHARGED MORE TEAR GAS. THREE PRESSMEN AND
FIVE STUDENTS WERE DETAINED, THEN RELEASED LATER THE
SAME DAY. BEFORE DEPARTING ON JULY 12, AMERICAN
GROUP STRONGLY PROTESTED POLICE BEHAVIOR TO EMBASSY, AND
SAID POLICE HAD FIRED TEAR GAS PROJECTILES INTO CROWD
AT SHORT RANGE IN ORDER TO INJURE DEMONSTRATORS.

TRAVELOGUE PRESENTED BY GROUP ON RETURN TO
U.S. IS CERTAIN TO BE SENSATIONAL AND WILL FURNISH
NEW AMMUNITION TO ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT. GROUP'S
BEHAVIOR WHILE IN VIET-NAX OFFERED CONSIDERABLE AFFRONT TO
VIETNAMESE SOVEREIGNTY, WHICH SOME LOCAL PRESS HAS
NOTED IN SHARP EDITORIAL COMMENT. (THERE HAS BEEN
SYMPATHETIC COVERAGE BY OPPOSITION PAPERS AS
WELL.)

E. STUDENT PROTESTS

MILITANT VIETNAMESE STUDENT GROUPS ARE PURSUING THEIR
PROTEST MOVEMENT, DESPITE THE PRESIDENT'S WARNING STATEMENT
OF JULY 3. PROTESTS NOW CENTER AROUND INTENTIONS
EXPRESSED AT ALL FIVE UNIVERSITIES TO BOYCOTT MILITARY

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TRAINING AND EXAMINATIONS.

F. CON SON DEVELOPMENTS

GVN AND VIETNAMESE PUBLIC OPINION WERE SLOW IN REACTING TO CON SON ISLAND PRISON "TIGER CAGE" DISCLOSURES MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION WHICH VISITED THE ISLAND JULY 2. THE FIRST GVN COMMENT WAS MADE ON JULY 9 WHEN A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN DENIED THAT THERE WERE ANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS ON CON SON. HOWEVER, ON JULY 10, THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE ANNOUNCED THAT THE GVN TOOK A SERIOUS VIEW OF THE "TIGER CAGE" CHARGES AND WAS IMMEDIATELY DISPATCHING AN INVESTIGATING TEAM TO THE ISLAND. THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT IF THE REPORTS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL TEAM WERE FOUND ACCURATE! THE GVN WOULD "TAKE STEPS TO REDRESS THE SITUATION IMMEDIATELY, PARTICULARLY TO ORDER THE ABOLITION OF THE SO-CALLED TIGER CAGES". THE REPORT OF THE GVN INVESTIGATING TEAM HAS NOT YET BEEN RELEASED. WE UNDERSTAND ANOTHER GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE, COMPOSED OF MORE SENIOR OFFICIALS, WAS TO DEPART JULY 14 FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THE SITUATION ON CON SON.

PRESS HAS IN THE MEANTIME BEGUN TO COMMENT ON THE "TIGER CAGES". GENERAL TONE IS CRITICAL OF GVN FOR MAINTAINING THE CAGES AND SOME PAPERS ACCUSE THE U.S. FOR ALLEGEDLY USING THE ISSUE AS A POLITICAL PRESSURE TACTIC (SOME CRITICIZING THE USG, OTHERS, THE AMERICAN ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT). SEVERAL PAPERS ARE PUBLISHING "TRUE-LIFE" ACCOUNTS OF CON SON, WHILE STUDENT GROUPS HAVE REPORTEDLY SENT PRESIDENT THIEU A DESCRIPTION OF CONDITIONS IN OTHER VIETNAMESE PRISONS.

VI. EXTERNAL

A. KY VISITS THAILAND

VICE PRESIDENT KY AND AN OFFICIAL PARTY VISITED THAILAND JULY 12-13. DURING HIS STAY, KY DISCUSSED INDOCHINA SITUATION AND CAMBODIA, IN PARTICULAR, WITH PRIME MINISTER THANOM AND OTHER RTG LEADERS. IN TALKING WITH PRESS, KY REPORTEDLY STRESSED NEED FOR U.S., THAILAND AND

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SVN TO JOINT TOGETHER IN ASSISTING CAMBODIA, AND CONFIRMED
THAT 5,000 CAMBODIAN TROOPS ARE NOW BEING TRAINED IN SVN
WITH ANOTHER 5,000 TO BE TRAINED LATER. KY REPORTEDLY
ALSO EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT AMBASSADOR BRUCE'S
APPOINTMENT WOULD RESULT IN ANY PROGRESS AT THE PARIS
TALKS.

B. REPATRIATION OF PW'S AND FISHERMEN

SIXTY-TWO SICK AND WOUNDED PW'S AND 24 INTERNED
FISHERMEN WERE REPATRIATED TO NORTH VIET-NAM ON
JULY 11. THEY WERE CARRIED BY A SVN NAVY LST TO A
POINT ONE KILOMETER SOUTH OF THE 17TH PARALLEL AND TEN
KILOMETERS OFFSHORE AND DISEMBARKED INTO MOTORIZED
JUNKS. OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT SIGHTED SMALL BOATS WHICH
MET THE JUNKS APPROXIMATELY 80 METERS OFFSHORE, DETAINED THEM
FOR 15 TO 20 MINUTES AND ESCORTED THEM TO A BEACH IN
THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE DMZ. ICRC OBSERVERS AND NEWS
CORRESPONDENTS WITNESSED THE REPATRIATION FROM THE
LST. AFTER CASTING OFF FROM THE LST, THE REPATRIATES THREW
THEIR CLOTHING AND GIFTS GIVEN TO THEM ON DEPARTURE
INTO THE WATER AND SHOUTED ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS.

C. MME. BINH TO VISIT INDIA AND CEYLON

THE LONG-DELAYED VISIT TO INDIA OF PRG FOREIGN
MINISTER MME. BINH WILL REPORTEDLY BEGIN JULY 18.
ACCORDING TO INDIAN GOVERNMENT SOURCES, MME. BINH WILL BE
THE GUEST OF THE GOI FOREIGN MINISTER DURING HER ONE-
WEEK STAY. THE SVN CONSUL GENERAL IN NEW DELHI HAS TOLD
US HE WILL ABSENT HIMSELF FROM INDIA DURING THE VISIT
AS A "MARK OF DISPLEASURE". MADAME BINH IS EXPECTED TO
PROCEED TO CEYLON AS GUEST OF NEW BANDARANAIKE GOVERN-
MENT, WHICH AS ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO RECOGNIZE
BOTH NVN AND PRG.

D. HOANG VAN HOAN'S TRAVELS

LAO DONG PARTY POLITBURO MEMBER AND DRV NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY DEPUTY CHAIRMAN HOANG VAN HOAN HAS CONTINUED HIS
EAST EUROPEAN TRIP. HE LEFT BULGARIA JULY 7 FOR EAST
GERMANY, WHERE HE WAS ASSURED BY CHAIRMAN OF

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THE PEOPLE'S CHAMBER GOETTING THAT "THE PEOPLE OF VIET-NAM WILL ALWAYS FIND THE GDR PEOPLE A RELIABLE FIGHTING PARTNER".

V. COMMUNIST PUBLIC STATEMENTS

A. CON SON "TIGER CAGES"

DURING THE PAST WEEK VIET CONG AND DRV MEDIA HAVE GIVEN HEAVY PLAY TO REPORTS CONCERNING CON SON PRISON CONDITIONS. RELATING THE CON SON SITUATION TO THAT OF AMERICAN POW'S, LIBERATION RADIO ON JULY 10 ASSERTED "THE U.S.-THIEU-KY-KHIEM CLIQUE'S CRIMES (AT CON SON) HAVE UNMASKED THE DECEITFUL ARGUMENTS AND TRICKS OF THE U.S. PUPPETS WHO HAVE CONSTANTLY BOASTED OF THEIR HUMANITARIAN POLICY TOWARD WAR PRISONERS (AND) WHO HAVE RAISED AGAIN AND AGAIN THE WAR PRISONER PROBLEM AT THE PARIS CONFERENCE ON VIET-NAM..." NHAN DAN ON JULY 11 ALSO CONTRASTED UNFAVORABLE THE CONDITIONS OF PRISONERS AT CON SON WITH THOSE ALLEGEDLY ENJOYED BY PRISONERS OF THE VIET CONG.

B. SVN ELECTIONS

COMMENTING ON THE RECENT MUNICIPAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS IN SVN, THE VIET CONG'S LIBERATION RADIO ON JULY 11 ASSERTED: "THIS SITUATION REVEALS THAT ALL PLOTS TO EMBELLISH THIEU'S PUPPET ADMINISTRATION HAVE FAILED PITIFULLY...EVERYTHING WAS PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED. THERE WILL NEVER BE FREE ELECTIONS UNDER THE DICTATORIAL AND FASCIST REGIME".

C. TCC CONFERENCE

LIBERATION RADIO ON JULY 8 CHARACTERIZED THE JULY 5-6 MINISTERIAL MEETING OF TROOP CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES AT SAIGON AS A GATHERING TO RECAPITULATE DEFEATS, ADDING THAT AFTER MANY "DEFEATS" AND BEING "FORCED TO WITHDRAW U.S. TROOPS FROM CAMBODIA... NIXON COULD DO NOTHING BUT CONVENE THIS CONFERENCE TO TRANQUILIZE HIS LACKEYS AND DISCUSS NEW TRICKS WITH THEM.

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VII. PACIFICATION

A. CHIEU HOI

THE RETURNEE RATE ROSE SLIGHTLY DURING THIS REPORTING PERIOD BUT WAS STILL SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EITHER THE 1969 OR 1970 (TO DATE) WEEKLY AVERAGES OF 908 AND 635 RESPECTIVELY. CURRENT DEPLOYMENT OF ARVN TROOPS IN CAMBODIA CONTINUES TO DEPRESS THE SUCCESS OF THE CHIEU HOI PROGRAM IN MR IV, TRADITIONAL HEAVY CONTRIBUTOR TO THE NATIONAL TOTAL.

RECAPITUATION OF RETURNEES:	1970	1969
JULY 5 - 1	465	993
JUNE 28 - JULY 4	453	818
YEAR'S TOTAL TO DATE	17,140	22,735

B. TERRORISM

THERE WERE 135 MORE VICTIMS OF ENEMY TERRORIST ACTIVITY THIS WEEK THEN THERE WERE LAST (694 VS. 559) MAKING THE HIGHEST TOTAL SINCE THE WEEK OF JUNE 4 - 11 WHEN 1,345 VICTIMS WERE REPORTED. SO FAR IN 1970, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME 17,098 VICTIMS OF ENEMY TERRORISM INCLUDING 273 MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND 772 MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL POPULACE WHO WERE SELECTIVELY ASSASSINATED. TERRORIST ACTIVITY WAS AGAIN CONCENTRATED IN MR II WHERE 100 OF THE 259 TOTAL INCIDENTS AND 58 OF THE 91 TOTAL ABDUCTIONS TOOK PLACE. NOTEWORTH WAS THE SHARP DROP IN ABDUCTIONS NATIONWIDE TO THE LOWEST TOTAL REPORTED SINCE THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 5.

	JUNE 26-JULY 2	JULY 3-9	YEAR TO DATE
INCIDENTS	240	259	6,735
KILLED	130 (*30)	225 (*28)	4,297
WOUNDED	285	378	7,967

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ABDUCTED 144 91 4,834

SELECTIVE ASSASSINATIONS

C. REPATRIATES

THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED A "SPECIAL BLOC FOR THE RELIEF OF VIETNAMESE REPATRIATES FROM CAMBODIA". AS OF JULY 9, MORE THAN 140,000 PEOPLE (INCLUDING 9,753 CAMBODIANS) HAD SOUGHT REFUGE FROM CAMBODIA IN VIET-NAM. THE ANTICIPATED RETURN OF CAMBODIANS TO THEIR COUNTRY HAS BEGUN: 4,970 PEOPLE WHO WERE BRIEFLY SHELTERED IN PLEIKU PROVINCE HAVE BEEN RETURNED BY BOAT TO PHNOM PENH, AS HAVE 803 PEOPLE FORMERLY QUARTERED IN BINH LONG PROVINCE.

VII. MILITARY

THIS WEEK ENEMY-INITIATED ACTIVITY SHOWED A DECREASE FROM 601 TO 501 INCIDENTS. SEVEN ENEMY CACHES WERE UNCOVERED DURING WEEK TOTALLING ONE-HALF TON OF ARMS AND MUNITIONS AND SIX TONS OF RICE. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ENGAGEMENT OF THE WEEK OCCURRED IN MILITARY REGION I ON JULY 8 WHEN ELEMENTS OF THE 9TH NVA REGIMENT WERE ENGAGED NEAR KHE SANH: 139 ENEMY WERE KILLED IN THE ENSUING BATTLE AND AN ADDITIONAL 143 WERE KILLED BY AIR STRIKES IN THE SAME AREA ON JULY 10. IN MR II ENEMY-INITIATED ACTIVITY WAS AT REDUCED LEVEL AND CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF LIGHT AND SCATTERED HARRASSING ATTACKS. SIMILARLY, IN MR III ENEMY ACTIVITY WAS CHARACTERIZED BY LIGHT ATTACKS BY FIE AND LIMITED GROUND ATTACKS, PRIMARILY AGAINST ALLIED MILITARY INSTALLATIONS. ENEMY-INITIATED ACTIVITY IN MR IV REMAINED LIGHT, WITH 148 INCIDENTS REPORTED DURING WEEK. ALLIED AND ENEMY KIA DURING WEEK ENDING 111200 JULY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

	US	FWF	RVNAF	NVA /VC
RVN	72	0	343	1,831

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VIII. WIRELESS FILE

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8 -- SENATOR TOWER PRAISES VIABILITY OF SOUTH VIET-NAM GOVERNMENT, EUF 46, ARF 66, EPF 40, MEF 65. THURSDAY, JULY 9: SOUTH VIET-NAM GRADUATES FIRST CLASS OF LAND REFORM TRAINEES, EPF 49, EUF 57, AF 113. COMMUNISTS AGAIN IGNORE SAIGON'S ELECTION INVITATION, EPF 51, ARF 100, EUF 59, SEF 53, AF 112, MEF 77. FRIDAY, JULY 10 -- SAOUTH VIET-NAM REVIEWS PACIFICATION PROGRESS, PLANS, EPF 61, RIO 75, EUF 85. THANT APPEALS FOR RELEASE OF NEWSMEN MISSING IN CAMBODIA, ARF 121, EUF 12 74, SEF 66, AF 145, MEF 102. MONDAY, JULY 13: NXION AVOIDS SPECIFIC VIET-NAM PULLOUT IN SETTLEMENT HOPE (BACKGROUND-SULLIVAN BYLINER), MEF 17, EPF 10, ARF 22, EUF 10, SEF 9, AF 14. RENEWED EFFORTS EXPECTED AT PARIS TALKS (BACKGROUND-KOENIG BYLINER), MEF 18, EPF 11, EUF 17, SEF 16, AF 36, ARP 38 (JULY 14). AUSTRALIANS REBUILD SOUTH VIETNAMESE RADIO STATION, EPF 2, ARF 6, RIO 9, TUESDAY, JULY 14: NIXON REAFFIRMS HIS ADMINISTRATION'S PEACE AIMS, AF 65, EUF 33, SEF 28, MEF 45, EPF 28. BI-PARTISON SENATE GROUP APPEALS TO HANOI ON WAR PRISONERS, EPF 25, MEF 41.

ROGERS

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